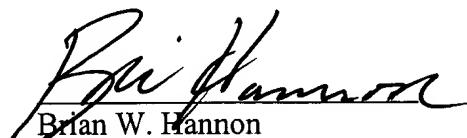


PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
U.S. Appln. No. 09/838,340

REMARKS

Claim 36 was inadvertently not placed in the application. New claims 43 and 44 have been added. Claim 44 is identical to canceled claim 35, but dependent on claim 43. Entry and consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
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APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 35 is canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

Claims 43 and 44 are added as new claims.

--43 (New). The compressed solid material as claimed in claim 34, wherein the hollow defined in the compressed solid material extends completely across the length of the compressed solid material with its opposite ends opening outwardly through respective end faces thereof.

44 (New). The compressed solid material as claimed in claim 43, wherein the ratio of an inner diameter D2 of the cylindrical hollow relative to an outer diameter D1 of the compressed solid material is $D2/D1 = 0.40$ to 0.60 .--.